

# CRITICS IN SENATE ASK RUSK TO TELL OF PLANS FOR WAR

He Asserts Administration  
Weighs 'All Alternatives'  
but Will Say No More

'SETBACKS' CONCEDED

But Secretary Testifies U.S.  
Regains Initiative—To Be  
Heard Again Today

Excerpts from Rusk testimony  
are printed on Page 16.

By JOHN W. FINNEY  
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WASHINGTON, March 11 —  
The Senate Foreign Relations  
Committee pressed Secretary  
of State Dean Rusk today to  
disclose whether the Admin-  
istration was planning to ex-  
pand the war in Vietnam.

The Secretary, however,  
would go no further than  
the statement that the Admin-  
istration was re-examining its  
policy from "A to Z" and con-  
sidering "all alternatives."

Among the alternatives, Mr.  
Rusk indicated, is an increase  
in the American military  
strength in Vietnam.

In a day-long, nationally  
televised defense of Admin-  
istration policy, Mr. Rusk  
acknowledged that the United  
States and South Vietnam had  
suffered some "serious set-  
backs" in the recent enemy  
offensive.

He contended, however, that  
the military picture was be-  
coming more encouraging be-  
cause the United States and  
its allies were "returning to  
the initiative."

Sees 'Turning Point' in War

The war, he declared, has  
reached a significant "turning  
point," with the outcome de-  
pendent upon which side most  
quickly seizes and retains the  
initiative.

At the same time he cau-  
tioned that heavy fighting lay  
ahead, fighting that would  
test the will and determination  
of the United States.

Mr. Rusk found the com-  
mittee, which has long been  
critical of the Administration's  
policy, turning toward direct  
opposition to the war.

There was talk of holding up  
the foreign aid bill—the ostensi-  
ble subject of the hearing—  
until the committee received  
some satisfactory answers on  
the future course of the war.  
It was Mr. Rusk's first pub-  
lic discussion of Vietnam policy  
before the committee in two  
years, and he came well pre-  
pared for what the Adminis-  
tration had expected to be a poli-

Continued on Page 17, Column 1

ical confrontation at a critical  
time of decision.

For some six hours, under  
glaring television lights, Mr.  
Rusk defended Administration  
policy before a committee that  
was generally hostile and a  
crowd that sometimes jeered.  
The confrontation, however,  
appeared to be inconclusive.

For the most part Mr. Rusk  
reiterated often-stated argu-  
ments, sometimes repeating al-  
most verbatim statements he  
had made in speeches and Con-  
gressional testimony.

Perhaps the most significant  
point to emerge from the hear-  
ings was the decided swing in  
opinion within the committee  
against the Administration's  
Vietnam policy.

In the hearings with Mr.  
Rusk two years ago, the com-  
mittee majority tended to be  
critical but unwilling to come  
out in open opposition to the  
policy.

But today Stuart Symington,  
Democrat of Missouri, and Clif-  
ford P. Case, Republican of  
New Jersey, openly condemned  
the Administration's policy as  
sterile and contrary to Ameri-  
can interests. Two years ago  
Mr. Symington and Mr. Case  
questioned, but did not oppose,  
American policy.

'War or W.P.A. Project?'

And Senator Karl E. Mundt,  
Republican of South Dakota,  
long a supporter of Adminis-  
tration policy, voiced reserva-  
tions today. Protesting that  
the Administration was failing  
to give sufficient priority to the  
war or to present a convincing  
case for it, Senator Mundt  
asked at one point: "Is it a war  
or a W.P.A. project?"

Mr. Rusk had hoped  
would be a one-day confronta-  
tion before the television cam-  
eras threatened to turn into a  
prolonged argument between  
the Administration and un-  
committed.

At the end of the day, some  
of the Senators, including J. W.  
Fulbright, the committee chair-  
man, had not had time to ques-  
tion Mr. Rusk. As a result,  
after some testy exchanges  
with Senator Fulbright, Mr.  
Rusk agreed to reappear be-  
fore the committee tomorrow  
morning.

In the background at the  
hearing were reports, frequent-  
ly referred to by the Senators,  
that the Administration was  
considering sending as many as  
206,000 additional troops to  
Vietnam. Senator Fulbright said  
of the reports: "I have no rea-  
son to doubt them."

But Mr. Rusk persistently re-  
fused to discuss them or even  
told the committee that Congress  
would be consulted before any  
decision was reached to send  
additional troops to Vietnam.

Says Policy Is Reviewed

Largely as a result of the  
evening's tet, or lunar new  
year, offensive, Mr. Rusk said,  
"the entire situation is under  
consideration from 'A'  
to 'Z'."

But he said that he was as-  
sured by President Johnson yes-  
terday that the President had  
"not made any fresh decisions  
or come to any new conclu-  
sions."

Only in general terms did  
Mr. Rusk discuss the nature  
of the current reassessment.

Among the aspects being re-  
viewed, he said, were the  
status of the enemy forces,  
which he said had been badly  
damaged in the Tet offensive;  
the status of the pacification  
program, which he admitted  
had been set back; the buildup  
of South Vietnamese forces,  
of which he expressed en-  
couragement, and the possible  
military contribution of other  
allies.

Mr. Rusk described the cur-  
rent situation as "serious"  
but "not hopeless."

There is "going to be some  
hard fighting ahead," he said,  
and it is "going to test us to  
the limit." But there are "groun-  
ds for encouragement," he said,  
since the allied side was "re-  
capturing the initiative" ahead  
of the enemy.

Asked at one point by Sen-  
ator John Sherman Cooper, Re-  
publican of Kentucky, whether  
the Administration was con-  
sidering the alternative of de-  
escalation and a negotiated end  
to the war, Mr. Rusk said that  
"all alternatives" were being  
considered.

But at the end of the day  
testimony, Senator Cooper ob-  
served: "Your emphasis seems  
to be on a military solution."

Mr. Rusk was careful not to  
foreclose the possibility of an  
additional troop commitment.  
Nor did he foreclose the possi-  
bility that the war might be  
expanded into North Vietnam.

Asked by Senator Albert  
Gore, Democrat of Tennessee,  
what effect an invasion of  
North Vietnam would have  
upon the nation's balance of  
payments, Mr. Rusk refused to  
answer on the ground that the  
question should not be dis-  
cussed in public session.

"Surely we have demon-  
strated that we are not itching  
to invade anyone," Mr. Rusk  
said. He then went on to ob-  
serve that "it has been our  
hope that we can bring it to a  
close without a geographical  
expansion of the war."

At the start of the day, after  
Mr. Rusk completed his state-  
ment on foreign aid, Sena-  
tor Fulbright introduced the Viet-  
nam issue by describing the  
Administration's policy in Viet-  
nam as "wrong and nothing  
short of disastrous."

In reply Mr. Rusk began to  
speak of "organizing the peace,"

asserting that this country  
must demonstrate that aggres-  
sion cannot succeed.

Senator Fulbright cut him  
off, however, with the observa-  
tion that "there is no ques-  
tion about organizing the peace  
but great differences on how  
it should be done."

Some Senators, such as John  
B. Sparkman, Democrat of Ala-  
bama, Bourke B. Hickenlooper,  
Republican of Iowa, and Frank  
J. Lausche, Democrat of Ohio,  
came to the defense of Mr.  
Rusk and the Administration.

But the questioning from  
other Senators was generally  
critical, and the hostility to  
Administration policy seemed  
to rise as the day wore on.

Sits With Bowed Head

As the criticism mounted,  
Mr. Rusk sat with his head  
bowed, to protect his eyes  
against the strong lights, and  
fingered a paper clip instead  
of his customary cigar.

The Secretary seemed visibly  
shaken when the Senate Demo-  
cratic leader, Mike Mansfield,  
observed that "a feeling of un-  
rest, frustration and uneasiness,  
to put it mildly," was  
building up in the Senate and  
the country at large over the  
Administration's Vietnam po-  
licy.

Senator Mansfield criticized  
the bombing of North Vietnam,  
which he contended had failed  
in its military and political ob-  
jectives, and criticized the Ad-  
ministration for not pursuing  
more forcefully various pro-  
posals that had been made for  
negotiations.

Repeatedly Mr. Rusk took  
the position that North Viet-  
nam was not interested in  
serious negotiations and would  
accept no settlement that did  
not give it South Vietnam.

Senator Wayne Morse, Demo-  
crat of Oregon, delivered a 10-  
minute "question" in which he  
accused the Administration and  
its supporters on Capitol Hill  
of engaging in "a snow job" to  
"cover up the provocation" com-  
mitted by the United States  
in 1964 by sending American  
destroyers into the Gulf of Ton-  
kin at the same time South  
Vietnamese PT boats, supplied  
and trained by the United  
States, were bombarding North  
Vietnamese positions.

In reply, Mr. Rusk insisted  
that there was no provocation  
and that the destroyers had  
every right to conduct the pa-  
trol off North Vietnamese  
shores.

Corruption Charged

Senator Frank Church, Demo-  
crat of Idaho, protested that  
the United States was being  
driven into a position of sup-  
porting a South Vietnamese  
Government in which there was  
a "general pattern of corrup-  
tion and draft-dodging." The  
observation brought an approv-  
ing cheer from the youthful au-  
dience standing in the back of  
the caucus room.

Mr. Rusk acknowledged that  
there was "too much corrup-  
tion" and said that the United  
States was "pressing" the Sai-  
gon Government to remove it.

But, he said, "the national se-  
curity should not turn on the  
fact that a frail individual  
didn't do his duty in every  
case."

Senator Case suggested that  
there was a growing feeling in  
the country, which he shared,  
that the present course was  
"leading to nothing but the de-  
struction of South Vietnam."

Mr. Rusk replied that to  
abandon the present course  
would be "catastrophic."

Asked by Senator Fulbright  
why it would be "catastrophic,"  
Mr. Rusk explained that an  
American withdrawal would  
demonstrate to "Asian Commu-  
nism" that it could expand  
through wars of national libera-  
tion.

Several times Mr. Rusk con-  
tended that it was directly in  
the interest of the national se-  
curity of the United States to  
stop the threat of "militant  
Communism" in Southeast Asia.  
If not stopped, he suggested,  
it would "change the world bal-  
ance of power against us."